

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES N.C. STUDENT SAT SCORES HIGHEST EVER
Gains Outpace National Average And Reduce Achievement Gap

RALEIGH – Governor Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina students have posted the highest SAT score in the state's history, just one year after breaking the 1000-point mark for the first time. At the same time, the achievement gap between white, black and Latino students is closing while more North Carolina students are taking the test up from 68 percent participation last year to 70 percent this year. Easley released the results with State Superintendent Mike Ward at a news conference held at Enloe High School in Raleigh.

"We are extremely proud of our teachers, whose commitment to students is shown in these increased test scores," said Easley. "We are also proud of our students whose hard work over the last few years paid off when they sharpened their number two pencils, took the test and excelled. As our investments in our schools go up and class sizes go down, student achievement and SAT scores will continue to rise."

According to data released by the College Board, North Carolina's 2004 average total SAT score increased by five points, and the state's growth continued to outpace national growth on this measure. North Carolina posted the highest 10-year gain on the SAT of any state with higher than 10 percent participation. This year, North Carolina's mathematics score increased by one point to 507. The verbal score increased by four points to 499. The total average score for North Carolina is 1,006.

"The bottom line is more North Carolina students are taking the college entry test, and more are excelling each year," said Easley.

"This year's SAT scores show promising results for students in North Carolina," said Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board. "The state's SAT-takers have shown favorable gains in participation, especially among Hispanic students, and scores have increased. These results are important, because it means that more North Carolina students are pursuing a college education." The College Board strongly advises against using SAT scores to rank states. Student participation rates and the composition of test takers vary widely from state to state.

The SAT is one of the major college entrance requirements for high school students, and is the entrance exam most often taken in North Carolina. Seventy percent of North Carolina students took the college entrance exam, well above the national average of 48 percent. Among states that have a greater than 50 percent participation rate, like North Carolina, Tar Heel students led other states in increased scores and posted the 15th highest score.

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